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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FORMER CHIEF SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR
INDICTED ON FALSE STATEMENTS CHARGES**

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in Fresno returned a four-count indictment charging PEGGY R. HUNT, 53, of Exeter, California with making false statements to federal investigators from the U.S. Department of Interior in connection with an investigation regarding the management of the Sequoia National Park's Clover Creek Sewage Treatment Plant.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Marlon Cobar, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that on August 15, 2003 and September 18, 2003, HUNT made false statements to investigators regarding her discovery of a major rupture in one of the plant's main pipelines transporting treated effluent. That unattended rupture caused the release of thousands of gallons of treated effluent into the Sequoia National Park's waterways during HUNT's tenure as the Chief Operator of the Clover Creek Sewage Treatment Plant.

The indictment also alleges that HUNT made false statements to federal agents regarding her involvement in the alteration of figures on the plant's daily lab reports. Those reports document the plant's daily operations. HUNT has been since discharged from her position as the Chief Plant Operator.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

If convicted, the maximum penalty under federal law for each offense of is five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and a three-year term of supervised release.

The defendant is scheduled to appear on June 18, 2004, in Federal Court in Fresno, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Lawrence J. O'Neil for an initial appearance.

A copy of this news release is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home>, select Press Releases.

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